

TRIBUTE TO MR. CHRISTOPHER WESTHOFF, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CLEAN WATER AGENCIES

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and pay tribute to Mr. Christopher Westhoff, Assistant City Attorney—Public Works General Counsel with the City of Los Angeles, California.

Mr. Westhoff is an environmental champion for the City of Los Angeles, the State of California, and the nation. He is an exceptional leader and public steward dedicated to the improvement of L.A.'s water quality and public health. It is my pleasure to congratulate Mr. Westhoff on being named the new President of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, NACWA.

Mr. Westhoff has been a public servant in California for almost his entire career. He began as a prosecutor with the Los Angeles City Attorney's office and has been the General Counsel to the Board of Public Works for over 15 years. Mr. Westhoff is the Public Works Department's legal counsel on wastewater and other environmental regulatory issues including air and stormwater.

Mr. Westhoff has played a leadership role in guaranteeing clean and safe water for future generations of Californians by helping ensure an upgrade of the Hyperion Treatment Plant to full secondary treatment, developing and defending policies that have helped clean up the Santa Monica Bay, and achieving 100% beneficial reuse of the city's biosolids.

His role in negotiating a landmark settlement agreement for L.A.'s collection systems resulted in benefits to all parties and led to a reduction in sewer spills of more than 70%.

Another achievement of Mr. Westhoff's of particular significance is his role in developing and defending Los Angeles' model program to increase the participation of minority and woman-run business enterprises as part of city contracts. Mr. Westhoff successfully defended this vital program before the California State Supreme Court.

Mr. Westhoff will become NACWA's president later this month, after serving as NACWA's Vice President and Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee. The City of Los Angeles is a founding member of the Association and Mr. Westhoff was elected to the Board of Directors in 1999.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues of the 110th Congress to please join me today in congratulating Chris Westhoff on becoming President of NACWA and for his tireless commitment to Los Angeles, our state of California and our country. With Chris Westhoff as President, NACWA will no doubt build on its reputation as the leading advocate for responsible national policies that advance clean water and a healthy environment. I am certain the association will continue to flourish under his able leadership.

EXPLAINING VOTE AGAINST H.R. 1830

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, I wish to clarify for the record my vote on June 27th in opposition to H.R. 1830, which extends the Andean Trade Preference Act until February 29, 2008.

When an issue is complex and worthy of substantial analysis, and a bill is presented to us in a format which short-circuits that analytical process and legislative debate, it is my policy to resolve any possible doubt in the direction of a "No" vote. Bringing up this bill as a suspension was inappropriate. Furthermore, the Ways and Means Committee marked up H.R. 1830 on the same day that the House considered the bill. Under such circumstances, members of the House had virtually no time to review the bill and I felt obliged to vote no.

Had the bill been reported under a rule that allowed perfecting amendments to be considered, I might have reached a different conclusion.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS IN AZERBAIJAN

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a Resolution relating to human rights problems in the Republic of Azerbaijan. I am pleased to be joined by Representative THADDEUS MCCOTTER and Representative GARY ACKERMAN as original cosponsors of the Resolution.

The Resolution calls on the Government of Azerbaijan to release Farhad Aliyev and his brother, Rafiq, from detention during trial. Both of them have been detained in solitary confinement from October 2005 until today, when their trial is already in progress. It also calls on Azerbaijan to assure that their right to a fair and open trial before an independent and impartial tribunal is honored. Importantly, the resolution calls on the Azeri government to fulfill all its international obligations respecting the rule of law, including those relating to Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), among others.

Farhad Aliyev, a pro-market advocate and former government minister, was originally arrested on charges of complicity in an alleged attempted coup d'etat during the 2005 parliamentary elections. He is now facing trial on unrelated financial charges. Rafiq, the former president of the oil company Azpetrol, was arrested the same day on minor customs violations, and is being tried on similar financial charges.

The 2007 Freedom House Country Report has this to say about the rule of law in Azerbaijan: "The judiciary is corrupt, inefficient and subservient to the executive branch. Arbitrary arrest and detention are common, particularly for members of the political opposition. Detain-

ees are often held for long periods of time before trial, and their access to lawyers is restricted."

From the beginning, the arrest and trial of Farhad and Rafiq Aliyev have been marked by numerous violations of international legal norms, a view shared by independent observers, including the OSCE, the Council of Europe and many human rights organizations, not to mention the U.S. State Department. The Aliyevs have been systematically denied due process and a fair and open trial, as well visitation by family, medical and international legal advisers.

As the Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and having served as an election observer in Azerbaijan, I am aware that international human rights organizations, and the U.S. State Department, have raised concerns about human rights in Azerbaijan, including lack of free elections, arbitrary arrest and detention, and imprisonment of journalists, among other issues. I am particularly concerned about the ongoing crackdown on independent journalists. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has often criticized Azerbaijan about its violations of media freedoms, noting that at present there are more journalists in jail in Azerbaijan than in any other OSCE state. This resolution calls on the Government of Azerbaijan to release these journalists from prison and to identify and prosecute those who have been attacking reporters and editors.

I am well aware of the challenges and opportunities presented by the countries in the Caucasus region. Azerbaijan is a country with vast potential and is an important economic and strategic ally of the United States. I respect the role it is playing in the war on terror. But this is all the more reason for the U.S. Congress to urge the government in Baku to comply with its international human rights commitments.

Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution.

REINTRODUCTION OF THE "CONTRACTORS AND FEDERAL SPENDING ACCOUNTABILITY ACT"

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, today, along with Representative TOWNS (D-NY), I reintroduce legislation, the "Contractors and Federal Spending Accountability Act," that will fortify the current federal suspension and debarment system.

The United States is the largest purchaser of goods and services in the world spending more than \$419 billion on procurement awards in FY2006 and \$440,000,000,000 on grants in FY2005.

Yet the federal government's watchdogs, the federal suspension and debarment officials, currently lack the information that they need to protect our business interests and taxpayers' dollars. We have no centralized and comprehensive government-wide method to account for the performance of our contractors and assistance participants, and those who repeatedly violate federal law may still receive millions of dollars from the federal government.